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COMIC TALK™

X-MEN 2099 © 1993 MARVEL COMICS

RON LIM TALKS ABOUT X-MEN 2099

ISSUE #6

HEY, KIDS...

COMIC TALK

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PUBLISHER
Fred Greenberg

EDITOR
Thomas Harrington

LAYOUT & GRAPHICS
Rolf Saint-Agnes
Dale Monn

GRAPHICS ADVISOR
John Workman

COVER
Ron Lim

INTERVIEWER
Clifford Meth

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Phil Marino

COVER COLORIST
Barry Blair

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INTRODUCTION:

Ron Lim is the perfect artist to bring the X-Men into the 21st century. He first got recognition for his work on *The Silver Surfer*, the title that brought the cosmos back into the Marvel universe.

It's no secret that Marvel has been constantly expanding its line-up, and the "2099" series is clearly part of a plan to facilitate its growth by creating sub-universes that can be followed by themselves or seen as part of the whole thing.

In retrospect, it's amazing that it took them so long to do it. After all, DC has had a future universe going for years. Future universes allow you to start virtually from scratch, yet incorporate ideas and characters familiar to the readers. And you don't have to worry about concocting a story about the Soviet Union, them seeing it in print six months later when everyone's calling it Russia again.

Lim points out that Marvel, which has been accused of stretching concepts and markets thin, has done a savvy job of developing the 2099 universe, starting with a few titles featuring solo characters, and slowly branching out until doing the obvious; making a 2099 book with new X-Men.

Of course, this is also the first X-Men spin-off to be more or less unconnected to the X-Men line. *Excalibur*, *New Mutants*/*X-Force*, and *X-Factor* all established strong tie-ins to regular X-books before breaking off on their own. (Even the *New Mutants* has Professor X). In fact, in terms of characters, this is the biggest leap the X-Men concept has had since... *Giant-Size X-Men* #1, the revival that first catapulted the X-Men to the top of the comics world.

It could work.

Tom Harrington

RON:

Clifford Meth: What is the main project that you're working on right now? Are you doing twenty things at the same time like you were, or are you starting to slow down?

Ron Lim: Yeah, well it was slowing down, but right now I'm still working on quite a few things. This month's pretty ugly.

CM: What's going on this month?

RL: This month I finished with the last issue, the last half of *Infinity Crusade*. I just finished *X-Men 2099* #2, *Spider-Man Unlimited* #3, and the first issue of the second series of *Dragon Lines* that I'm doing for Epic

Comics.

CM: You must be making a mint. How can you keep up with all this stuff?

RL: Well, it's kind of rough right now because some of the stuff landed a little closer together than I wanted, but it's not too bad.

CM: Let's go back. I can't even remember, Ron, it seems like you're a newcomer to me, but of course you're one of the top ten artists in the business right now, at least according to the *Wizard*. You seem to have come almost out of nowhere. What was your first professional work?

RL: The very first thing I did was a really small independent book called *Eradicators*, but that was so small I don't know if I should even mention it.

CM: Who was that for?

RL: A small company out of Sacramento called Silver Wolf. I did one issue for them.

CM: What year was that?

RL: It must have been '85, '86.

CM: You pencilled and inked that?

RL: It had to be '85, actually. Yeah. I inked that.

CM: How old were you then?

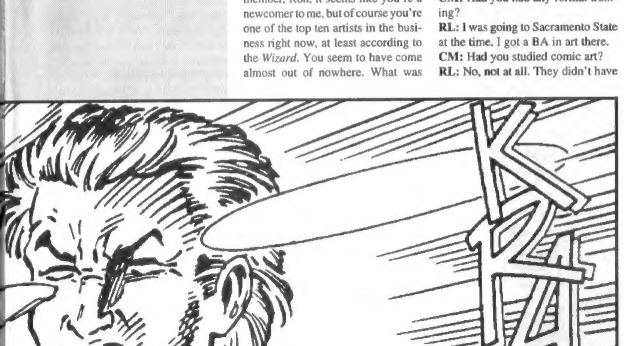
RL: Twenty-one.

CM: Had you had any formal training?

RL: I was going to Sacramento State at the time. I got a BA in art there.

CM: Had you studied comic art?

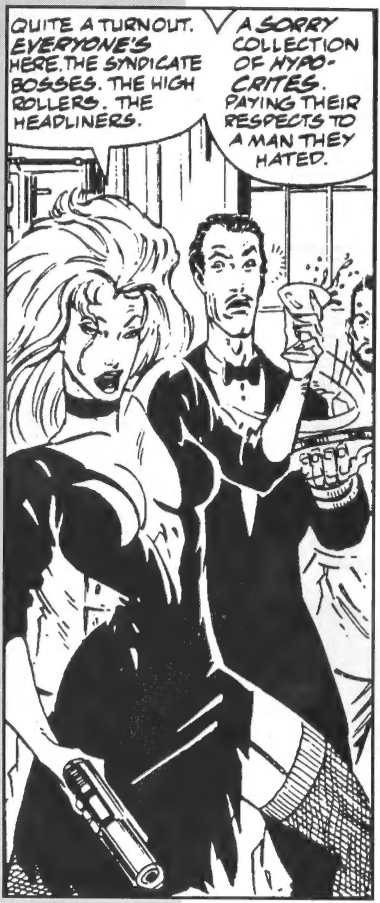
RL: No, not at all. They didn't have any type of class like that.



CM: It seems to me that almost fifty percent of the guys coming out of the industry are Kubert boys, you know.

RL: Right. If I lived closer to there, I would have gone there.

CM: Do you think that that puts some artists at a disadvantage, because


QUITE A TURNOUT. EVERYONE'S HERE. THE SYNDICATE BOSSES. THE HIGH ROLLERS. THE HEADLINERS.
A SORRY COLLECTION OF HYPO-CRITES. PAYING THEIR RESPECTS TO A MAN THEY HATED.

there's so much political clout in coming out of the Kubert School?

RL: I don't know. I find that if you can do good work then you can get work. I think that it probably helps having that kind of environment to work in, but I don't think there's that much political stuff in terms of getting work from Marvel, or DC, or any of the big companies.

CM: Well, it certainly is an advantage. It's a nice foot in the door, but you don't need it so it doesn't make a difference. I'm sure you've got plenty of buddies who came out of there.

RL: Oh yeah, yeah, some people I know.

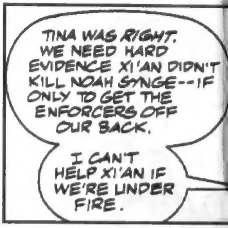
CM: So after this comic that you did for Silver Wolf, were you heading toward Marvel at that point?

RL: After that the first thing I did that got a pretty good run was a book called *X-Mutants* that I did for Malibu. Do you remember that?

CM: Sure. That title's actually still around.

RL: Yeah, it is. They revised it not too long ago, but it was *Eternity* back then.

CM: That's right, before the split. I didn't know that that was your work on there.


TINA WAS RIGHT. WE NEED HARD EVIDENCE XI'AN DIDN'T KILL NOAH SYNGE--IF ONLY TO GET THE ENFORCERS OFF OUR BACK.
I CAN'T HELP XI'AN IF WE'RE UNDER FIRE.

RL: Oh, yeah.

CM: Your style has changed a bit since then.

RL: The editor back then, David Campiti, he wanted that style for that kind of book.

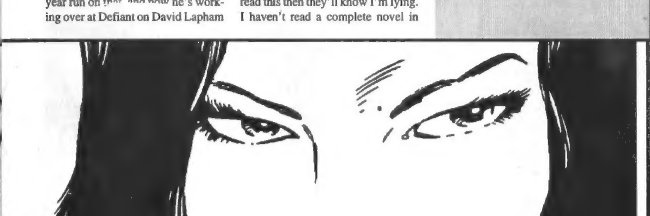
CM: And you were inking yourself then at that point too?

RL: No. At that point Tim Dzon was inking me.

CM: That was the first time you were

getting inked by somebody else then?
RL: Right
CM: What did that feel like?
RL: It was pretty cool. It was kind of strange because you know artists, pencillers especially, always have this idea of how the artwork's going to look in their own head and seeing it inked by someone else was kind of neat. In a way I liked it and in another way I thought that some things were a little different than I expected. Actually I'm wrong, Mike Witherby inked me first.
CM: Is that right? What did you think of his work, and let me warn you he's a good friend of mine.
RL: Oh really? He's a great guy.
CM: He *is* a great guy. Do you like his inks?
RL: Oh, definitely. In fact, it was kind of cool because back then I had problems and he was fixing stuff up that I would goof up on or whatever.
CM: Mike has done a lot of changing in that time.
RL: Oh yeah, he's working on tons of stuff now.
CM: He just came off working on Ron Wagner on *Morbius* after a whole year run on that, and now he's working over at Defiant on David Lapham *Plasm* 0 cards that are out right now. That was Mike's inks as well and I think he's just improved tremendously in the few years that I've known his work. So it's pretty interesting that you were working with him.
RL: Where do you live?
CM: I live in Rockaway, New Jersey, so how do I know him? Because Ron Wagner is my very close friend. Ron was living ten minutes awayfrom me the last ten or twelve years, although we didn't know each other all that time. He just recently moved out to Chicago, but we stay in touch and we did a lot of music together. Are you a musician?
RL: No.
CM: Seems like almost every other guy in the industry is a musician. Have you noticed that?
RL: Yeah, but I'm not. I like music. I prefer to listen to it because I have no musical skill whatsoever.
CM: What are your hobbies outside of comics?
RL: I'm a big movie buff, I like laser discs. What else? I still read comics and the occasional novel. Actually don't put that in because if my friends read this then they'll know I'm lying. I haven't read a complete novel in

"PENCILLERS... ALWAYS HAVE THIS IDEA OF HOW ARTWORK'S GOING TO LOOK IN THEIR OWN HEAD AND SEEING IT INKED BY SOMEONE ELSE WAS KIND OF NEAT."



on *Plasm*.
RL: Oh, is that right?
CM: Yeah, and that's a real nice job for him. He's very excited about that. It puts him in the limelight for the first time really. *Morbius* was a nice series, but the inker wasn't going to get a lot of attention from a book like that.
RL: Especially like a first new title from like Defiant will get.
CM: That's right. In fact, he did the probably a year or so.
CM: What was the last novel you read?
RL: I don't remember.
CM: Getting back, I'm going to keep steering off like this, I hope you don't mind. When you came off of *X-Mutants*, what year was this, '89?
RL: I think it was probably about '87 or '88.
CM: And then what happened?

RL: And then I was also working on that book called *Hero Alliance*. I did two issues of that, but at that point it started hitting some snags.
CM: Was John Hebert over there when you were there? He was doing some pencilling for that.
RL: I was already long gone. I had already been working for Marvel by that point. In between *Hero Alliance* and Marvel was *Badger*. I did like a year's stint on *Badger*.

RL: He was on *Justice* for a while.
CM: That's right. That's very interesting. So that whole new universe actually did some good for somebody.
RL: Yes it did, yeah.
CM: How did those things sell?
RL: I'm not sure how well...obviously they didn't do all that well because they got cancelled.
CM: But I was just wondering, initially did they have any kind of impact?

AS READY AS I CAN BE WITH THE ARCHAIC HARD-WARE EDDIE BROUGHT IN HIS PACK.
I HAVE A FRIEND AT ALCHEMAX WHO'S MUCH BETTER AT MOLECULAR ANALYSIS THAN I AM.
BUT IN YOUR UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HUMBLE OPINION...

CM: Tell me about your first Marvel work.
RL: I got hired for *Psi-Force*. I was the regular artist on *Psi-Force* for six issues.
CM: That was part of that new universe.
RL: Yeah. It was with Fabian Nicieza. That was pretty cool.
CM: That whole universe actually spawned quite a few artists who are very big in the industry right now. Mark Texeira was coming up at that point too. Actually, Ron Wagner was on one of those books, I can't remember which one.
RL: Also Lee Weeks.
CM: Which one?

"THIE FIRST JOB I DID...DIDN'T ACTUALLY GET INTO PRINT UNTIL ABOUT TWO YEARS."

RL: I don't know because when they first came out I was still...I mean, I wasn't hired by Marvel. I came on on issue #15 or #16 of *Psi-Force*.
CM: Oh, it was already a little late in the game.
RL: By the time I came on it was already like over a year...
CM: That was pretty exciting, I bet, getting your first work from Marvel.
RL: Oh yeah, it was really cool because Howard Mackie called me up and offered me a regular...the first job I did for them was a *Black Panther* backup. That didn't actually get into print until about two years after I worked for Marvel.
CM: Howard Mackie, there's an-

PUT THAT RUST BUCKET IN GEAR AND GO, METALHEAD!
WE'VE GOT TO LOSE THOSE SYNGE ENFORCERS BEFORE ANY OF THEIR PLASMA BURSTS CONNECT!
KCHOW
ONE OF THEIR HIRED GUNS ALREADY SHOT XI'AN.
AND IF HE DIES--
--EVERYTHING FALLS APART!

other name I know. Was he an editor at that point?

RL: Yeah, he was editor.

CM: That I didn't know. I've only known him as a writer.

RL: Yeah, he hired me. He gave me my first regular assignment.

CM: He was the editor of what? The new universe office so to speak?

RL: *Psi-Force* for sure. I don't know what other new universe titles he edited, but he may have done other ones.

CM: Well he's actually come quite a long way since that point as well.

RL: In fact we'll be working on a series next year, a Venom Ghost Rider thing, the first time I'll work with him as a writer, so it'll be a lot of fun.

CM: How did you get on the *Silver Surfer*?

RL: I heard that Marshall Rogers was leaving the *Silver Surfer* comic. At that point Mike Higgins was the editor and I talked to him quite a bit because I was working with him on some stuff, and I knew it was coming out so I asked him if I could do some samplesfor the book. He said sure go ahead, so I tried it, he liked it, and they actually hired me.

CM: If I remember right, the Surfer was kind of in the toilet in sales before you came on that book.

RL: I have no idea what the sales were, but...

CM: Let's put it this way, you weren't getting royalties off the first issues that you were on.

RL: No. Actually the sales have risen quite a bit since then.

CM: You were actually the one who was at least partially responsible. I guess your writer was Jim Starlin?

RL: Yeah, but he didn't come until #30, I was on with issue #15.

CM: When did that book really start picking up?

RL: It did okay with the end of that Evolutionary War thing.

CM: And then I think issue #25?

RL: Yeah, around there.

CM: There was some kind of special cover or something, or was that issue #50 I'm thinking of?

RL: You're thinking of issue #50.

CM: I remember it started really picking up speed with Starlin, and with Thanos coming back. Were you in on the conversations to do that?

RL: No. In fact it was weird because my editor, Craig Anderson, was telling me they're looking for a new writer because Englehart was leaving the title. When he mentioned Starlin I thought no way because Starlin was one of the big influences from when I started drawing.

CM: He was an art influence?

RL: Right.

"WHEN [CRAIG ANDERSON] MENTIONED STARLIN I THOUGHT NO WAY BECAUSE STARLIN WAS ONE OF THE BIG INFLUENCES FROM WHEN I STARTED DRAWING."

CM: And we all remember his artwork, it was wonderful. I could never figure out why he stopped.
RL: Exactly. His *Warlocks* stuff was my favorite stuff I think then...the Captain Marvel stuff...so I heard he might come on, and I was getting really excited. I was like, oh man, that would be great, but I didn't think it would happen, and when he finally came on board and they kept me as artist I was extremely happy.
CM: That must have been nice working with somebody who you'd grown up admiring. Was he easy to work with?
RL: Oh yeah, he's a great guy. He's real easy to talk with. He's a funny guy. It's weird, because I always pictured him as being a lot more serious because of his old stories, but he's real friendly and a nice guy. In fact I didn't have too much to do with it in terms of plotting because he already had this big storyline in his head, but it was just great to be able to interpret his, you know, to do my artwork.
CM: Is he really into the characters?
RL: Oh yeah, quite a bit.
CM: It seems like he is.
RL: His stuff, especially the *Infinity* stuff, is so massive, I can't see how he can do it, you know, without this extensive storyline crossing all these characters together.

"EVEN JUST WATCHING MOVIES GIVES ME DIFFERENT IDEAS ON HOW TO TELL A STORY."

CM: How about you, Ron, do you really get into the characters?
RL: I like the characters a lot. But I don't think I get too much into it because I've got to get stuff out on time in the job.
CM: That kind of ruins it a little.
RL: Well I can't read it as a fan when it comes out, but I still enjoy having a part in that, creating the stories.
CM: Do you go back and look at your old comics?
RL: Yeah, sometimes, and it's really weird looking at it from this point, after drawing comics for so long. Some of that old stuff makes me cringe.
CM: Well, probably some of the stuff you're doing now, 10 years from now you'll feel the same way.
RL: [laughs] It's like--yeesshh!
CM: I mean, if you continue to grow. Do you think that you're still growing?
RL: Oh yeah, of course. I mean I think just the constant drawing and just seeing other stuff, even just watching movies, gives me different ideas on how to tell a story.
CM: You must be one of the fastest artists in the business right now.
RL: Well, I try to do quite a few books. I don't plan for them to come out at the same time.
CM: But you do have a reputation for

THOR #3
KEITH PAIGON '75

truly being one of the fastest. I think I heard somebody say that you can do like eight or nine pages a day. Is that true?

RL: No, no, no. If I do breakdowns I can probably do about eight pages, but if it's pencils I can do about three to four pages max.

CM: And how old are you?

RL: Twenty-eight now.

CM: Twenty-eight. Don't you think that's awful fast for somebody your age?

RL: I guess so. I can't say because that's just the way I do it.

CM: Guys like Paul Ryan can do that.

RL: Yeah right.

CM: But since the old days of the Marvel bullpen you don't think of guys turning out stuff that fast. I mean look at how much difficulty most artists today have just meeting their deadlines on one book. So why is that?

RL: I have no idea. They might have other interests, I don't know.

CM: No, I actually get to speak to quite a few and I think it's actually pain ful for some people.

RL: Are you serious?

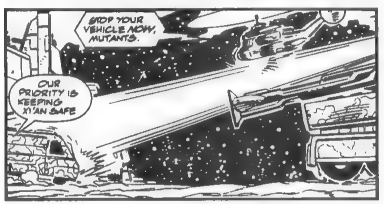
OUT OF THE FIRE AND INTO THE FRYING PAN.
WE'RE ROMO-KILL.
STAY YOUR COURSE, EDDIE. DON'T STOP UNTIL I GIVE THE WORD.
I'VE LANDED DEAD CENTER IN THE MIDDLE OF A WAR.
THEY STARTED TOTAL WELL FINISH IT.

"I USUALLY TAKE LIKE ONE DAY OFF ON WEEK-ENDS JUST TO MAKE SURE I DON'T BURN OUT."

CM: Yeah.

RL: I guess any creative process, if you get in a jam, it's going to be hard to get it out. Some days of course it's harder to get to the board than other days but I figure I got to do it so I sit down and it just comes out sooner or later.

CM: Are you at it seven days a week?



RL: No. My schedule runs six days if it's pretty busy and I usually take like one day off on weekends just to make sure I don't burn out or whatever. Usually it's a six day schedule and I work about six to eight hours a day. Not too bad.

CM: That's kind of comfortable. I

"THE FIRST ARTIST I THINK I ACTUALLY STARTED COLLECTING WAS JOHN BYRNE."

I FEEL LIKE A GRAVE ROBBER DOING THIS.
SYNGE STOLE MORE FROM THE PEOPLE THAN A MERE TISSUE SAMPLE.
HE ROBBED THEM OF THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR MONEY, THEIR LIVES.
HE MADE SURE THE HOUSE ALWAYS TOOK ITS CUT.

mean you could cut back. You don't have to go at the pace. What drives you?

RL: I know. [laughs] I've got to learn to say no more often because I get offered like these pages...

CM: You've got to be making enough money at this point that you can back off a little.

RL: Yeah, it's great, but the problem is people are going, it would be great for you to draw that story. It's a lot of fun and the editors I work with right now are all really great so it's working out really good.

CM: Well as long as you realize that there's guys who try to keep this pace for too long.

RL: Yeah I'm really aware of that burn-out.

CM: I saw it happen with George Perez.

RL: Right. He's turned out quite a bit of stuff.

CM: It was gorgeous too. It was just beautiful. I find it interesting how you don't want to turn down certain characters and certain plots just because you want to be involved.

RL: Some characters I just love to draw and it's like too hard to resist.

CM: Whose work did you grow up admiring? Who was your favorite artist?

RL: Let's see. The first artist I think I actually started collecting was John Byrne. The Byrne/Austin stuff for the *X-Men* was probably the first thing I started collecting in terms of art style.

CM: Collecting comics or collecting actual pages?

RL: No, just the comics.

CM: Do you collect artwork as well?

RL: I usually trade for pages. Actually I've got quite a pile of artwork so actually I guess I do, but I usually get stuff I really, really like. The Byrne stuff, I collect some Marshall Rogers stuff, and just various stuff like that.

CM: That's neat. So who else did you like? John Byrne was your favorite artist back in those days?

RL: It was between Byrne and George Perez. Those two are probably the most major influences. Neal Adams was a major influence.

CM: When you were a kid you were reading Neal?

RL: I was reading those giant-size reprint books, you know those giant

AS READY AS I CAN BE WITH THE ARCHAIC HARDWARE EDDIE BROUGHT IN HIS PACK.
I HAVE A FRIEND AT ALCHEMAX WHO'S MUCH BETTER AT MOLECULAR ANALYSIS THAN I AM.
BUT IN YOUR UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HUMBLE OPINION...

DC treasury things.

CM: Sure, I remember those well.

RL: I got those and, let me think, what else, who else was there? Let's see, there's got to be more than that. Jim Starlin, of course.

CM: Do you remember Mike Ploog?

RL: Yeah, definitely. In fact I think the first thing I was exposed to of his stuff was in the old black-and-white magazines. He had a real distinct style.

CM: Who else was big back then? George Tuska I guess was pretty active.

RL: *Iron Man.*

CM: Yeah he was pretty active on a bunch of books. Don Perlin was drawing for Marvel right around at that point.

RL: I read all that stuff. I was like absorbing it.

CM: Were you drawing then?

RL: Yeah, of course, I copied their stuff and tried to imitate their style.

CM: Whose style do you see in your work now, if anybody's?

THIS TISSUE WAS DEAD BEFORE IT WAS SUBJECTED TO AN ACCELERATED DECOMPOSITION PROCESS--
--THAT SIMULATES THE EFFECT OF XI'AN'S HAND. THERE'S OUR PROOF.
THAT'S OUR CUE, BOYS. RAISE THE CURTAIN AND BREAK A LEG.

RL: Gosh you know...probably a cross between Byrne and Perez, and maybe even a little bit of Starlin because I worked with him for so long.

CM: Did he show you any art tips at

"THE FIRST THING I WAS EXPOSED TO OF [MIKE PLOOG'S] STUFF WAS IN THE OLD BLACK-AND-WHITE MAGAZINES."

HENRI, THE WALL'S OPENING.
SHOOOOOOOSH
GOOD EVENING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. WELCOME ONCE AGAIN TO THE SYNGE CASINO AND HOTEL.
TONIGHT'S ENTERTAINM WILL BE PROVIDED BY SYNDICATE'S ELITE ENFORCERS--
--THE RAT PACK!
IT'S SHOW-TIME.

all?

RL: Actually he didn't. We talked quite a bit, but in terms of artwork he really didn't say much really.

CM: That's funny. You would think that he would be one of the masters to learn from.

RL: Right.

CM: He was always able to get such great expression in his characters.

RL: There's a sense of power in his figures too.

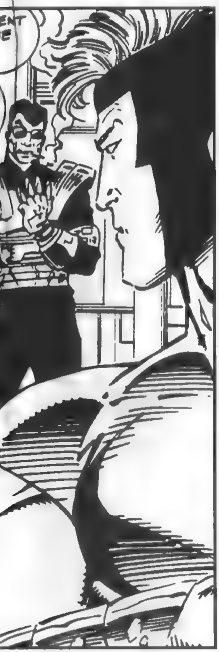
CM: Yeah, I remember the expression in the faces.

RL: Yeah, when they grit their teeth you could feel it.

"TERRY AUSTIN...EVEN TO THIS DAY HE'S MY FAVORITE INKER."

CM: Right. Well, now everybody who copies Rob [Liefeld] does that. It's not new anymore, but back then it was pretty fresh. I thought it was cool. I was asking about the people you admired. How about inkers? Do you remember actually knowing inkers and admiring inkers?

RL: Yeah. Again, Terry Austin because you know the stuff with the X-Men with Byrne. That stuff was really nice. After I started studying the artwork more, I could actually tell what he inked because of his backgrounds more than his actual figures. His backgrounds had a really distinct



look to them. He had those real thick and thin lines, he's probably my favorite inker. Even to this day he's my favorite inker.

CM: Has your favorite penciller changed?

RL: I like a whole bunch of guys.

CM: Who comes to mind and why?

RL: I really like Steve Rude. He's one of my favorites now. I've been following *Nexus* since it came out. His figure work is just mind-blowing, and his style is pretty nice, his design sense.

CM: People are going to read this and start buying his stuff.

"I REALLY LIKE STEVE RUDE... HIS FIGURE WORK IS JUST MIND-BLOWING."

RL: [laughs] Who else do I follow now? There's so many...I also like...Kevin Nowlan's stuff really blows me away. I also collect a lot of Japanese Manga which is kind of a strange influence.

CM: Japanese what?

RL: It's Japanese comics.

CM: I've never seen it.

RL: They have more of...I mean in

terms of visual storytelling they devote more pages to like small things so you can see like a sense of movement and that kind of thing.

CM: I should check that out.

RL: Yeah, you should. If you haven't seen it, I think you'd like it. I mean you ought to find the good stuff. *Akira*'s good, and *Appleseed*'s good, and that kind of stuff.

CM: I've had people recommend *Akira* to me before but they never quite explained why.

RL: Oh really? I just like the whole storytelling. I mean some of these stories take forever to tell because they devote so much time to it. It's like huge volumes but it's worth it. It really pays off. I mean I've been following some Manga for years and they're still not ended yet.

CM: What do you think of the stuff coming out of England?

RL: Oh that stuff's great too. In fact the Alan Moore *Miracle Man* stuff with Garry Leach blew me away. When that first came out, that's when I first discovered the British stuff.

CM: That was really nice stuff. I remember that.

RL: [Brian] Bolland is another one of my favorites. We're going to hit every artist, you know that. I love everybody.

CM: I'm not just looking to drop names. I'm really interested in *what* you see in people, you know what I mean? What about Bolland in particular?

RL: His stuff is so realistic looking. His line work is so precise, it's really fun to look at.

CM: Do you ever stop when you're looking at something and try to do something like it? Like you're reading a comic and you pull up a pad and try to do something somebody did.

RL: Yeah. It's kind of weird, because I use to like study stuff and then like try to imitate the style for certain effects and stuff, but I've gotten to the point where I draw so much that I really don't look at anything anymore. It's more time-consuming to have to look at the stuff and say... you know I can draw like that guy or whatever. It's probably good I don't want to imitate anybody, at least too closely.

CM: I remember Adam Hughes was at a convention the day after he'd seen *Aladdin* and he was sitting around doodling all the different super-heroes in the way that they had done the film *Aladdin*.

RL: Is that right?

CM: Yeah.

RL: That's great.

CM: He was so affected by the film.

KEITH
WREN

RL: Yeah, Adam's another guy. I really like his stuff. His *Star Trek* definitely blew me away.

CM: Yeah I'm a big fan of his work as well. Let's get away from all the people that we're talking about here. What I'm looking to do is get a sense of why you do what you do. Can you even get into that? Can you analyze your own artwork?

RL: I don't know. Probably the thing that I think about most is the storytelling styles. The guys I like most have clean layouts. I mean you can follow a story with your eye. I guess the more design, the more complicated it gets, and that kind of distracts from the story, to me it does. I actually prefer having a simple, real straight-forward storytelling like Byrne does, and Perez does, and that kind of thing.

CM: I guess certain writers are going to lend themselves more to that than others.

RL: Right. Some writers work a lot more visual than others too. Because I mean some use more text, of course, and others use less.

CM: How about Starlin?

RL: Starlin actually is real visual.

CM: Because he's an artist.

RL: Right. He works really visually. His descriptions of stuff are...I mean, it was kind of cool because the more I worked with him the more he let me run with it. I mean he would give me more simple descriptions and stuff like that.

CM: Is that the way Howard Mackie is as well?

RL: I haven't worked with him yet. I haven't got a first script from him yet.

CM: Some guys just give you a basic look and it's up to you to do whatever you want, right?

RL: Right. And some guys it's almost like illustrating a short story

"THE GUYS I LIKE MOST HAVE CLEAN LAYOUTS. I MEAN YOU CAN FOLLOW A STORY WITH YOUR EYE."

because they give you the plot in almost like short story form.

CM: That's very interesting. So you're on *Silver Surfer*, let's get back to that. Did y u have any ideas on what you wante l to do with that? Was there anyth ng you were looking to change or do

RL: One of the things I wanted to do was give the Surfer a sheen, like a shiny reflective skin. I noticed that in the past they did that occasionally but overall they had that white with blue

about itbefore. Did you get a lot of comments on that?

RL: Yeah, yeah. In fact everyone that told me liked the way I did his reflections, I mean the shining on the skin. I actually got some letters saying that they thought I was drawing it a little too muscular at one point. They wanted a more thin, almost athletic-looking Surfer, which I can see.

CM: The Surfer that I most enjoyed in my childhood, of course, was John

"I WANTED TO GIVE [THE SURFER] THE LOOK AS IF HE WAS MADE OF REAL CHROME."

highlight look to it, which is cool, but I wanted to give him the look as if he was made of real chrome. It was kind of hard to do with black-and-white artwork and then having the color added, but that's what I tried to go for. That's why I added all that gleam and shine to it.

CM: Yeah, that was a whole different look for the Surfer, come to think of it, and I don't think I ever really thought Buscema's Surfer.

RL: Definitely.

CM: In fact, one of the first interviews I ever did was Stan Lee. Stan had told me that the Surfer was the character he felt closest to, which was interesting to me because the Surfer came so late in his career...I guess he was close to 40 years old when he started doing that. I would think that the *FF* or Spider-Man

having been his earliest work...

RL: Right, you would think that would be more of...

CM: No, he said I feel closer to the Surfer because the Surfer always was a thinker, and the Surfer had a lot to say. The Surfer was more fun and he really thought it was the best work he ever did.

RL: That's great. I always enjoyed the Surfer stuff.

CM: Of course John Buscema did so much for the look of that character. By the time you worked on it the character actually did look quite different. You had your own Surfer.

RL: Although I do like...I mean the Buscema version was one of my favorites too, that's the style I grew up with...that and the Kirby actually. I like the Kirby too, although Kirby drew it so much differently than Buscema did.

CM: Yeah, Kirby's was a harder character, and Buscema had a very...

RL: Expressive style.

CM: The Surfer was much softer. He didn't even want to slap anybody around at that point.

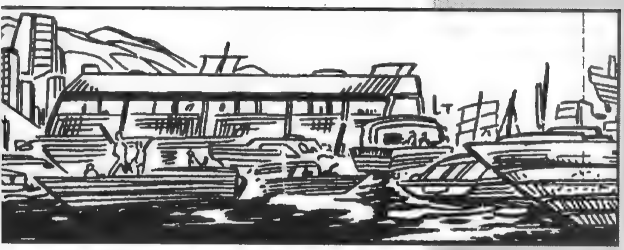
RL: That attitude has changed over the years too.

CM: I guess that book was about as close as Marvel was ever going to get to talk about world situations and the effect of the Vietnam war. So it was at a very different time. The '90s are a much more aggressive and brutal time and the Surfer is actually still very soft compared to where "super-heroes" have gone.

RL: Especially with the coming of these new savage kind of super-heroes.

CM: Right, and of course the Surfer

"THE BUSCEMA VERSION [OF THE SURFER] WAS ONE OF MY FAVORITES... THAT'S THE STYLE I GREW UP WITH."



as Lee and Buscema defined him was pre-Wolverine still, pre-Punisher, pre-Deathlok, pre all of that. The big guns just didn't exist; nevertheless, he was still a much softer character than the characters that were around.

RL: A lot more. A lot more good and noble type of character.

CM: So it must be fun working on a character like that.

RL: Oh definitely. Oh man, I mean he was a favorite of mine. The *Fantastic Four* is probably still one of my favorite comics.

CM: You haven't done the *FF* yet?

RL: I did two or three issues. It was like really rushed so I didn't have time to do what I wanted to do with them. At one point down the road I'd love to draw that book. I discovered Surfer from that book and I was like wow this character's great. I was drawing him ever since I was young.

CM: You were the regular artist on the Surfer for how long before you started doing a second book?

RL: I don't know, let me think. Two years maybe. At one point I got way ahead on the book. I didn't have anything else to draw you know. I had only that one book to draw, and I just kept working on it.

CM: Were you inking yourself at all?

RL: Oh no, no. Even now I just ink like covers occasionally because I find that I'd rather just draw, pencil it, and let someone else add the ink to it.

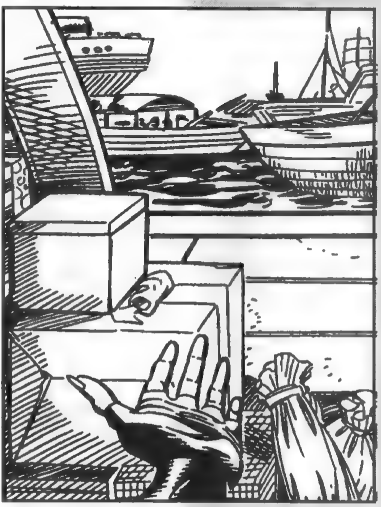
CM: Well, you get to do tons and tons of work that way.

RL: Right.

CM: I mean, gosh, you even did most of those Marvel cards if I remember right.

RL: No. The third series...I did quite a few of those cards. I think I did almost 30 of them.

CM: Who handles your artwork anyway?



RL: A guy named Spencer Beck just recently started selling it for me.

CM: Before that?

RL: It was nobody. I just carried it to the cons and...

CM: I know Spencer.

RL: Yeah, he's cool. I haven't worked with him too long yet, but he seems pretty up front and pretty cool.

CM: Before that you were just doing it yourself?

RL: Yeah. I have quite a bit of artwork still at my house. I just sell it when I feel like it. I don't go to a whole lot of shows either.

CM: What are things like that go for now? For instance, one of the cards. When you resell things like that, I'm just curious what do things like that go for?

RL: You mean the original artwork for the cards?

CM: Yeah.

RL: I have no idea. Some of the cards I actually gave away, but some I've sold for like fifty bucks a card basically.

CM: That's it?

RL: Yeah.

CM: I thought that things like that went for more. I had no idea.

RL: The prices fluctuate. It all depends on the market, too. Some I can sell for more, plus I don't want to gouge anybody too badly.

CM: One of these days I'm going to have to pick up one of your pieces somewhere. I guess I'll have to contact Spencer then.

RL: [laughs] No, no. The thing with Spencer is he sells my art, but he doesn't own it. I have a lot of artwork at my house, and I take it and sell it at cons myself.

CM: Well, I never see you out at the New York shows and I never come out to the west coast.

RL: Ninety percent of my appearances are in California because I'm not a real big traveller, in terms of flying.

CM: Sure, why should you...you've got work to do.

RL: Right, at least that's what they tell me at Marvel. [laughs]

CM: I don't know how some of these guys go to these shows constantly because it puts you behind on your work.

RL: Definitely. I figure the comics are the most important thing...well first of all that's our job. The cons are fine but they get real tiresome after awhile.

CM: You must have some art in your collection that you really love.

RL: Oh definitely.

CM: What do you have that you love?

RL: I have some Starlord pieces. Remember the first Byrne/Austin Starlord? That's still one of my favorite comics.

CM: That was just about his earliest work. In fact...

RL: The first work they did together.

CM: Who was inking him when he was doing *Iron Fist*?

RL: It was Frank Chiaramont, something like that. And also Dan Green back then.

CM: I remember when he just came over from Charlton, and started doing *Iron Fist*.

RL: The whole series was really great too.

CM: Speaking of soft characters, Iron Fist was another attempt at that. It was the '70s, the sensitive '70s, so it was time for a sensitive Iron Fist who I guess was a cross between Kwai Chang Cane and just some Bruce Lee-type of costumed hero.

RL: Exactly right.

CM: It was Zorro meets Kwai Chang Cane.

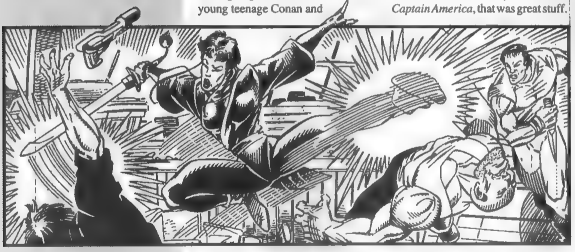
RL: The Kung Fu Zorro.

CM: I really enjoyed that book. That was a lot of fun.

RL: Yeah, me too.

CM: Coming to your second book, what did you start working on?

RL: After *Surfer* I was supposed to take over *Conan the Barbarian* for awhile. Me and Mike Hughes, we were going to start with a young teenage Conan and



work our way up to a regular Conan, but things got really mixed up and I just never got the go-ahead, and scripts wouldn't come in for two or three months or so. I don't think it was anybody's fault, it was just that they had a lot of fill-ins that they wanted to get done first. By the time they got me started on it I was offered *Captain America* and I couldn't pass that up because that was another one of my favorites.

CM: Before we get off Conan, who was your favorite Conan artist?

RL: Barry Windsor-Smith. I liked Buscema's version as well, but Barry's was great.

CM: Yeah Barry's was beautiful.

RL: His Conan was almost like in a different world.

CM: Did you ever see the one that Neal Adams did, issue #37?

RL: Yeah, that was great too.

CM: That was a real special cover, a real solid cover. In fact I've seen some of Neal's paintings of Conan...

RL: Oh really?

CM: ...I haven't seen them in person, I've seen them just on the books, and of course I picked up a couple of the Neal Adams treasuries when I was a kid to see them in bigger format, beautiful stuff, nobody ever did Conan better. Except I guess Frazetta did.

RL: His Warren magazine covers were awesome.

CM: It was just killer, that stuff.

RL: He used to turn out quite a few of those covers for those black-and-white magazines.

CM: I remember those. Then after *Conan*, you said, to *Captain America*. Of course I remember your work on *Captain America*, that was great stuff. You had a whole new look for Captain America. It was a harder Captain America.

RL: Thanks. My whole thing about Cap was to try to get him to look like the hero that's been around like one of the longest. He was like the granddaddy of super-heroes.

CM: Drawing Cap as the granddaddy of super-heroes. I guess you gave him an older look--he looked 40ish.

RL: Right. I think he was like...he had to be a little older, I thought, because he's always calling other characters like son and everything.

CM: That's true, he does call them

"ME AND MIKE HUGHES, WE WERE GOING TO START WITH A YOUNG TEENAGE CONAN... BUT THINGS GOT REALLY MIXED UP."

son. You're right. He should look a little bit older. He shouldn't look like a kid.

RL: He ain't no spring chicken. He's a lot of fun. He's probably like Marvel's ultimate super-hero in terms of attitude and stuff like that.

CM: What a thrill that must have been...that's about as deep into the Marvel continuity as you can get, *Captain America*. To have been one of *the* artists on that book is very flattering I think.

RL: In fact I was telling Mark Gruenwald I got derailed by this stuff because I only thought it was going to be three issues but it turned out to be this whole three years...

CM: I've got a framed piece in my office that John Romita did for me of Captain America. I'm really lucky to have some of these types of things. I ran into him at the first Marvel con. Do you remember the Marvel cons?

RL: Yeah.

CM: Did they come to your town or was that just New York?

RL: I just heard about them, but I was never at one.

CM: I think it might have just been New York. That was the kind of show

"MY WHOLE THING ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA WAS TO TRY TO GET HIM TO LOOK LIKE THE HERO THAT'S BEEN AROUND THE LONGEST.

would you pick as your favorite, who did the definitive Cap?

RL: Romita definitely did a great Cap, and Byrne, even though it was brief, I liked his also. Sal's [Buscema] versio.. was probably one of the more definitive ones also.

CM: It's funny that you should mention Sal because that was about the point when you and I were reading when we were kids, #130 through #160 or something with the second Captain America from the '50s. Do you remember that?

RL: Yeah, I remember the whole thing.

CM: That was a great story. Who was writing that, Steve Englehart?

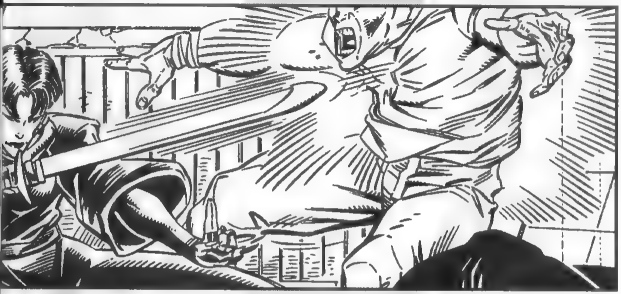
RL: Yeah, Englehart.

CM: That's what I thought. That was great. It wasn't long after that that Englehart decided to go out and write novels.

RL: Yeah, he did *The Point Man* or something.

CM: I can't remember what it was called. Some of his first stuff was appearing in *Weird Heroes*. Do you remember that series?

RL: Yeah. In fact I have a couple of those books.



where a lot of neat things just happened. It was still the days of the Phil Seuling conventions, and they were just great shows with film rooms, and just all sorts of stuff happening, and just about everybody would turn out at these things. Of all the people who ever drew Captain America, who

CM: I don't know what I did with mine. There were some great contributions from guys like Harlan Ellison, and Neal Adams. I think Steranko did something. I think Barry Smith might have even done something.

RL: I don't remember Barry Smith.

CM: I'm not sure. Maybe not. I just

remember it was like what the cream of the crop back then was doing...Steve Gerber. Remember Steve Gerber?

RL: Oh, yeah, definitely. His *Man-Thing* stuff. That was great stuff.

CM: Those were great days. It was a whole different Marvel.

RL: Yeah, a whole '70s Marvel.

CM: Well I know you worked for the guys, but let's talk about the '90s Marvel. In some ways the wheels fell off. Certainly the best talent in the industry no longer gravitates to Marvel. Good talent is there, maybe even some of the best, but all of the best is no longer owned by one stable. Those days are gone.

RL: I think mainly because there's just so many companies that have so many different options--you own characters, you get bigger royalties, bigger page rates. All that stuff contributes to these artists leaving and just doing whatever they want. It's almost like being a free-lance artist. I know lots of artists who are workingat four companies at the same time. For them that's great. I just like to be able to stay at one company.

CM: You've been pretty loyal to Marvel. I'm sure you've had work offered to you by other companies.

RL: Yeah. In fact I was going to do some work for DC later on but since then I've gotten a contract with Marvel and I'm pretty much...

CM: I didn't realize you were under contract with Marvel.

RL: Yeah.

CM: How does that work? How many artists are actually under contract with Marvel?

RL: I have no idea.

CM: I don't think there's that many.

RL: I don't think so either, because I know for a while there they were saying it was pretty hard to get a contract.

CM: How long does your contract obligate you and them?

RL: It only runs yearly and then we decide on whether or not we want to renew. It's not a real constricting contract at all.

CM: That's good. Do you think that Marvel's going to have to start working harder to compete?

RL: I think so. I've already seen some changes here and there. They've offered more royalties I think as a result of all this stuff at DC and everything, which is good. Competition is good for all the companies.

CM: If I had talked to you when you and I were originally scheduled to talk, the news was different on Image. All the news is not real good at all now.

RL: I've heard that they're cancelling a ton of books.

CM: Well they've cancelled five titles so far.

RL: Wow.

CM: And that leaves guys like Larry Stroman, and Keith Giffen, well I guess Keith's doing something else there, but Larry Stroman in particular, Jerry Ordway, Mike Grell, their projects are cancelled.

RL: I can't believe that. That's stunning news. They just started their projects. That's really weird.

CM: Apparently they weren't million sellers.

RL: Man, I remember back when 200,000 was a huge seller.

CM: Well, I mean that's part of the story of course. Another part of it is that they were giving away such tremendous royalties. One of the things I heard just recently is that they are paying Barry Smith $3,000 a page. Some of that might be advances on royalties, I would hope so, or I would imagine so. What I heard might not be true. I did hear it from about as close to the source as you can get without hearing it from Barry.

RL: That's incredible. That's mind-boggling.

CM: I've spoken to some of their other artists who had...even some of their writers who have had some pretty nice returns on work. That's great if they can pay it, but perhaps they're starting to see that the reality is that they are not going to be able to sell a million issues and to justify those kind of numbers they have to sell a million issues. They could get away with it in the beginning because they were the new kid on the block, they were the slicker packages, and they all had #1's on them, but there's only so many times you can renumber your comics.

RL: Plus having a #1 also from a new company is one thing too.

CM: Marvel's tried to follow, unfortunately from my perspective, a lot of what Image has done, rather than staying the course and doing what they do best. One obvious thing is that they've tried to hire or force existing people to draw like Liefeld.

RL: Which I don't understand at all because I've never felt any pressure from any editors to do anything other than draw like myself.

CM: Well, they were looking to hire people that could do that, and there's no doubt that they at least influenced Herb Trimpe to do it.

RL: Yeah, his style has changed so...

CM: I would have to say that Mark Pacella was doing it for a little while there, but he's not doing it really any more. He got a lot stronger very fast.

RL: What's he working on these days?

CM: Pacella's doing an Image project, but he was also doing...I can't remember right now. Actually he committed to a couple of Image projects, and he's still doing them. I can't remember the last thing he did for Marvel, but I was pretty impressed by it. I think he's a really strong artist.

RL: He was doing quite a bit for Marvel for awhile there.

CM: Who else did I see having a lot of Liefeld influence? I guess Greg Capullo on *X-Force*. Of course, that makes some sense because you're following the guy who made that book. That's excusable. Some of the other things I saw Marvel doing to copy Image were renumbering books.

RL: You mean like start numbers...

CM: Well, let's just take your *Infinity* series, every three or six issues is a new *Infinity* series.

RL: Like a regular series you mean?

CM: Well, how many different *Infinity* spinoffs have there been now?

RL: Three. I think the main reason for that not to be a mini-series, each one, as opposed to...because this thing wasn't supposed to be running as a continuous series at all.

CM: No, I think they've done it well, but in the old days I don't know if it would have been done that way. I think that that's an Image influence.

RL: This stuff was going on before Image though. If you think about it, *Gauntlet* came out and then the *Crusade* came out. That's when Image started coming out, actually.

CM: Well, then, maybe I'm wrong.

RL: Well, like *Secret Wars* and *Secret Wars #2*, the same thing there.

CM: They're doing it with a lot of *Venom* series right now.

RL: That's definitely influenced by that.

CM: I used to actually enjoy Marvel's year-long series. For instance one that I loved was the *Squadron Supreme*.

RL: I remember that. That was great.

CM: It was a 12-part series, you looked forward it each month. Same thing with the *Watchmen*. Of course, that came out from DC. It was fun knowing that you were going to read a book all year long. It's almost like watching *Star Trek* all year, and I really enjoyed that and I guess those days are kind of gone because the whole fast food mentality has now

"IF I DREW BATMAN, HE'D BE MORE MYSTERIOUS AND KIND OF DARK. WHAT'S WEIRD, THOUGH, IS I LIKE ROBIN TOO."

invaded comic books.

RL: I'm getting tired of the gimmicks as well.

CM: Now there's another thing. I guess Marvel really got the ball rolling with that and they did it first. They had the first diecut cover with that *FF #358*, and they had the first really silver, or prismatic, or whatever, and it was a beautiful cover, and it was really cool, and dealers had a field-day with it. They made a lot of money. It went into three prints, that book.

RL: Yeah, I know. I was like stunned, like this was wild.

CM: What books do you read for the writing?

RL: I read *Concrete* which I like, but it comes out sporadically. I read *Nexus*, because I like the stories in there. I read almost anything that Frank Miller writes.

CM: I love his work.

RL: I don't care too much for some of the British horror writing because I'm not a real big horror fan. My friends keep trying to get me to read the *Sandman*, but I can't get into it for some reason.

CM: I understand what you're saying. That's a different type of comic. If you're interested, *V for Vendetta* I thought was one of the finest comics.

RL: That was a great story.

CM: *The Dark Knight Returns*. These are the stories that floored me the most, and *The Watchmen*. I would have to say those three were...

RL: Those were like the pinnacle. Those were groundbreakers.

CM: That must be a fun book to draw, *Batman*.

RL: Oh yeah. That's the one title at DC that I'd love to do the most.

CM: How would you approach Batman?

RL: I'd probably draw him...well my favorite Batman was the Neal Adams, and the Marshall Rogers version. I just liked the way that they drew him. It was realistic, but it was a little dark you know. I wouldn't draw him running in the street during the daytime or even like in the middle of the street too brightly lit.

CM: You wouldn't draw him the way you draw Marvel characters?

RL: Right. If I drew Batman, he'd be a lot more mysterious and kind of dark. That's what I envision. What's weird though is I like Robin too, which is kind of strange.

CM: Would you have trouble drawing a new character, like a Batman, after you've been doing all this?

RL: Oh no, I don't think so. Because I mean it's not that much of a leap, I don't think. The only thing that would probably be different, just in terms of

Batman, is just the shadowy kinds of effects, weird lighting, that kind of thing.

CM: Speaking of weird lighting, you know whose weird lighting I loved? Gene Colan's. Do you think anybody every did those angles better than him?

RL: I don't think so. His Dracula stuff!

CM: That is just some of the finest work. And you can tell that like you

he was a film buff. No way he was able to see the world like that without watching films.

RL: Exactly. It's so cinematic.

CM: That's the word I was looking for. Do you ever go back and study any of these things or do you do it all from film yourself? Do you ever look back on some of the masters of the

industry that really broke some ground in comics?

RL: Oh, definitely. All my favorite artists, I have all their stuff and I go back and look at it occasionally just to get a feel again for what they're doing.

CM: Do you sit and try to copy it still, or just get a picture in your mind?

RL: I usually just read it or absorb it.

CM: Can you draw like other people? If I were to say to you draw like McFarlane, or draw like Erik Larsen, or draw like Gene Colan, can you do that?

RL: If you put it in front of me and say imitate it or copy it, I could do that, but I can't draw like their styles at all.

CM: Can't do it out of your head?

RL: No, no way.

CM: That must be pretty difficult for anybody to do. I mean like I've seen guitarists and you say to them play like Page, play like Clapton, and they don't have to play a Clapton or a Page song, they can play in that style.

RL: That feeling.

CM: And that's not easy to do. Very few people can do it, but I've seen it done and it's impressive.

RL: In terms of art, I can't do that.

CM: You've been in the industry for now. I don't know, in a certain sense since you were a kid, you've made your fortune in it, you plan on sticking around?

RL: Definitely.

CM: For how long?

RL: As long as I can because I'm just enjoying it.

CM: Can you keep doing this though until retirement? Is this going to be your business?

RL: Yeah, oh yeah. I'm in for the long haul, I think.

CM: So where's the industry heading and where do you want to see it go?

RL: I hope that the companies that are all around right now can stay around. It's never good when you have too few big guys because then there's a tendency to turn out the same stuff over and over. I think the competition is good, creator rights are always good, so if we can get better deals out the companies, all the better. In terms of anything else, who knows? I can't read the future.

CM: No, but I guess nobody back in the '60s in comics could have predicted where it would be now. In fact, five years ago nobody could have said where it would be now.

RL: It changes incredibly fast.

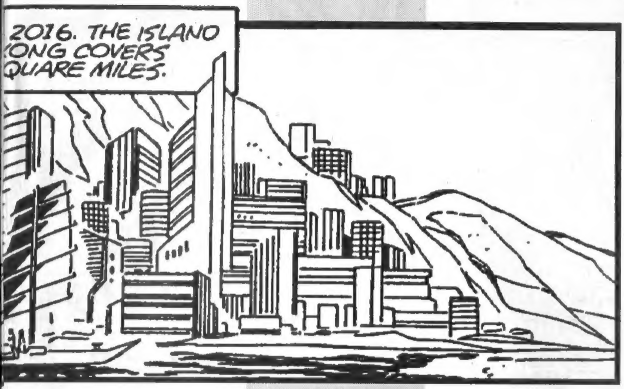
CM: I have some theories on it because I see it having it a tendency to follow other industries. Unfortunately it seems to befollowing the baseball card industry in many ways, which has now taken a lot of shots. It didn't survive that growth, and in a lot of

"THINK THE COMPETITION IS GOOD, CREATOR RIGHTS ARE ALWAYS GOOD."

ways people got hurt, but they weren't creators. We're talking about business people. It wasn't like baseball players themselves actually took a beating. Comic books is a different thing. Now with the glut of new companies and a lot more books...

RL: It has to fall out.

CM: Yeah, it can't last like this forever, but the survivors I think will be stronger and wiser. My prediction is that Jim Shooter's new company will be one of the players. I think that Valiant has made such ground that it



is here for good.

RL: Yeah, exactly. I can't believe he created another company that strong.

CM: Image, I don't know what's going to happen with them. It's hard to tell where they're going to go.

RL: I think they're all going to split up and do their own thing, each studio. It already seems so because each studio has their own project basically.

CM: That might happen. What also might happen is that they just continue to go with the marketing trend--go with the angles and try to stay one step ahead of everybody in terms of reading the audience, but not necessarily in producing comic books. Marvel, I only hope that things get better because I don't think it's been worse in a long time. I hope that what's gone on with the flight of so many of the top names in the industry is that they will start considering hiring some of their veterans back, guys that they've been ignoring for years now despite the fact that they're only perhaps in their forties or fifties and they think that they've become stodgy, and it's just not true.

RL: Those are the guys that can still draw and write and do it the old-fashioned way.

CM: So instead of just hiring people right off the street like Marvel has a tendency to do, maybe they'll go back and start using some of the guys who helped build that company in the first place.

RL: That would be great. That would be the way to go.

CM: And with DC, I think that DC is

"[THE VETERANS] ARE THE GUYS THAT CAN STILL DRAW AND WRITE AND DO IT THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY."

right on the money. I like what they're doing. Their Vertigo lines appeal to a whole new type of audience. People who would never have read comics before will now read some of that stuff and enjoy it.

RL: Yeah, they're catching a whole different audience.

CM: And what they've done with Superman and Batman, in terms of continuity and grabbing you week after week, and month after month, that's the way comic books were done when I was a kid, and should always be done I hope.

RL: Yeah.

CM: What's going on with the *X-Men*?

RL: John Moore's writing it. Did you ever read the *2099* title?

CM: Sure.

RL: John's writing it and Adam Kubert's inking it.

CM: Adam's great. I know Adam.

RL: The first time I spoke with him was when we got this assignment, and yeah man, everything he turns in has been great. I've really been enjoying it. He's a great artist in his own right.

CM: Adam lives like ten minutes from me.

RL: You're kidding me? Do you know him? Say hi to him when you see him next.

CM: I will. I don't know when I'm going to see him, but I talk to him.

RL: His stuff just blows me away.

CM: I love his stuff.

RL: The chance to work with him was really cool. This is going to be a fun series. Since it's in the 2099 continuity, we get to play with however we want basically.

CM: You're going to be one busy guy.

RL: That's right, too busy. It's a lot of fun, I've done two issues so far.

CM: Are you getting to create the characters?

RL: Yeah well, they came up with the general idea for the characters, but I got to design them from scratch, which has been a lot of fun.

CM: You're actually the first guy to design a new team of X-Men since Dave Cockrum.

RL: Is that true?

CM: Sure.

RL: That's a riot.

CM: Some of the characters you create now are bound to be around 20 years from now.

RL: That's true. That's great, I never thought of that.

CM: The *X-Men* is more than a comic book now, it's a culture. The whole mutant culture. They shouldn't grow it too fast in my opinion.

RL: That's what I like about the 2099 line is that they are expanding it slowly which is really good, which surprised me actually. They could come up with a Beanie and Cecil 2099.

CM: There's just going to be too many characters in the universes eventually. Crisis on Infinity Marvel Worlds. Let's see you've got the Guardians of the Galaxy and that whole future, and then you've got...[laughs] Have we talked enough about X-Men?

RL: Yeah I think so. □

UNLESS, OF COURSE, HIDING IS NOT YOUR STYLE.
SORRY ABOUT YOUR SHATTERED WINDOW.
MY FLOATING-CITY FRIENDS TELL ME YOU GUYS ARE IN THE BUSINESS OF BREAKING OTHER PEOPLE'S THINGS, SO I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D MIND.
NOW I KNOW. I HAVE TO TAKE OUT AT LEAST THREE OF YOU SPLATTER CREEPS BEFORE YOU'LL LISTEN TO MY WARNING--
--SO LET'S GET TO IT!